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## BUSINESS MEETINGS OF THE SOCIETY.

**ADJOURNED MEETING.**—The Society, according to due notice, held its adjourned meeting in the Vestry of Park-street Church, at 3 o'clock, P. M., on Monday, May 24, to hear the report of the "Committee of Twelve from different Religious Denominations," appointed at the last annual meeting to inquire into "the course pursued for years past by the executive officers." JOHN TAPPAN, Esq., one of the Vice-Presidents, was called to the chair; and the Committee's report, recommending a system of measures for the future management of the Society's affairs identical in every particular of importance with that hitherto pursued by its executive officers, was adopted at once with entire unanimity.

**ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING.**—The adjourned meeting, having done its assigned business, was dissolved; and the Society then proceeded to hold its regular Annual Meeting for business. The Report of the Directors, read by the Corresponding Secretary, and also that of the Treasurer, were unanimously adopted, and the old Board of Officers re-elected.\* Thereupon the Society adjourned to attend the public exercises in the evening, which were opened with prayer by the Rev. WILLIAM JENKS, D. D. A brief extract of the Report was given by the Rev. GEO. C. BECKWITH, D. D., and the Annual Address delivered by the Rev. FREDERICK D. HUNTINGTON, for which a vote of thanks was passed, and a copy requested for publication.

On motion of the Hon. AMASA WALKER, seconded by the Hon. SAMUEL GREELE,—

*Resolved*, That war is the parent of oppression, and standing armies the enginery of tyrants; and that the public sentiment which shall destroy all reliance upon either, will emancipate the world.

*Resolved*, That, having no faith in war as one of the heaven-appointed means of human regeneration and progress, or in the necessity of its instrumentality in disenthraling the nations, we see nothing in the history of the past, or the present, which leads us to doubt the soundness of our principles, or their adaptation to the wants of mankind.

The Society then adjourned without day.

### REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE.+

THE Committee appointed at the last Annual Meeting of the American Peace Society to investigate certain complaints against "the course pursued by its Executive Officers for several years past," present the following

#### REPORT.

They devoted much time and attention to the subject, giving a patient hearing to all who chose to appear as complainants, and also to all the Executive Officers who saw fit to reply.

The complaints preferred were of two classes; the first relating to the Executive Committee, and the second to the Corresponding Secretary. The complaints against the Executive Committee relate to the Financial System adopted by them. The complaints against the Corresponding Secretary relate, in part, to his connection with this financial system, having

\* Not entirely unanimous on this point, *three members* having voted in the negative.

+ The Committee's Secretary, who drew it up, stated that it was signed by all who were able to attend the meetings of the Committee.

reference to his mode of keeping accounts, to the extent of power and number of offices entrusted to him, and, in part, to certain representations publicly made by him, and also to his want of success and efficiency as the chief officer of the Society.

Having given a careful consideration to these complaints, the Committee are of the opinion, that the Executive Committee have ever designed to secure the best interests of the Society, and that they have been faithful in the discharge of their duties.

They are ready, moreover, to express unequivocally their confidence in the integrity of the Corresponding Secretary. Nothing has been presented that leads them to doubt his honesty, or to suppose that any of the funds under his control have been misappropriated. He has displayed great industry, and accomplished an unusually great amount of labor. The Committee believe the Society are fully prepared to judge with respect to his efficiency, his talents, and his fitness for the office he has held so many years. That he has met with opposition in the performance of his multiplied and varied duties, is not surprising. Few men could have discharged them so long without having their efficiency sometimes questioned, and without giving offence to some of the great number with whom they must come in contact.

The objection having reference to the number of offices, and the extent of power confided to the Secretary, should be carefully considered. It appears from the records of the Society, as well as from his own statements, that he has repeatedly and earnestly requested to be relieved of a part of his duties. It is evident that, unless the income of the Society is increased, the number of officers receiving salaries should not be increased, and, moreover, that in its present sphere of operations, the greater part of its funds must be raised by the Corresponding Secretary. It is a practice not unusual among benevolent societies for the same officers to perform the duties of Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer; and in some instances, though rarely, they perform the additional duties of collecting Agents.

But the peculiar difficulties in the way of the operations of this Society, the opposition to which it is exposed from friends of peace advocating principles differing from the doctrines of its authorized publications, render it very desirable that the officers controlling its funds, should not be exposed to the hostility they would sometimes meet in the discharge of other duties.

When the duties of an officer are so multiplied and varied as those imposed at present on the Corresponding Secretary, it is evident that the strictest accuracy and clearness should ever be exhibited in his accounts, and that any impression of failure in either of these respects, will interpose serious obstacles to his success, and greatly embarrass the operations of the Society. While all the funds of the Society have been satisfactorily accounted for, the Secretary has not always observed that strict *mercantile* method in keeping his accounts which the circumstances render especially desirable.

The Committee are of the opinion that the operations of the Society should be greatly extended, and an additional number of agents should be employed. Should this be done, some objections now alleged against the management of the Society would be removed, and the Corresponding Secretary could be relieved of some of the financial duties imposed on him, Time and effort would be required greatly to extend the income and influence of the Society, but far less, in the opinion of the Committee, than has been expended in raising it to its present state. The income the last year was \$3,403 86. There were paid to the Corresponding Secretary and Agents, for services and travelling expenses, \$1,583 85, leaving \$1820 for other purposes. The greater part of this income was raised by the per-

sonal influence of the Secretary, and the funds of the Society have been chiefly contributed year after year by the same persons. The Committee believe that other portions of the community, not now solicited, are ready to co-operate in sustaining this Society. It is now in the power of one man in a great degree to control the operations of the Society. He may secure his favorite objects, if so disposed, by creating a crisis in its affairs, or threatening to withhold his influence. It is evident, moreover, that should he resign his office, or be removed by death, the operations of the Society would be seriously embarrassed, and its continuance periled. It certainly is not desirable that a Society of this character should be thus dependent.

The Committee have not felt called upon in their investigations to go back of the year 1849. Nearly all the complaints preferred before them are connected with the period subsequent to the Annual Meeting in May of that year. Early in the year certain changes in the financial management of the Society were proposed which in subsequent discussions were termed the "Reform Plan." The Secretary declined complying with the provisions of this Plan; and in November, 1849, it was abandoned. By the Plan the Secretary was required to pay promptly all money received for the Society into the Treasury. But he objected to this, that he had been made personally responsible in the execution of the votes of the Executive Committee for the discharge of debts incurred previous to the adoption of this Plan, and therefore he should be allowed to use the funds by him collected to meet these obligations. Had a slight modification of the Plan been adopted, allowing the Corresponding Secretary to discharge such obligations, and to present receipts or proper vouchers to the Treasurer at stated times, showing that he had done this, the Committee think all difficulties would have been removed, and the Plan rendered unobjectionable. There appears to have been a serious difference of opinion as to the nature and practical workings of this Plan. During the few months it was in operation, the income of the Society was very small, and it became involved in debt. This was the principal reason why it was abandoned. Taking the Plan as its friends understood it, and as the Committee think it would be naturally understood, there was no necessity for this embarrassment.

The Corresponding Secretary was still the collecting Agent, and there was nothing in the Plan to prevent his usual success. But the Secretary seems to have understood the Plan to limit his duties to those peculiar to the office of Corresponding Secretary; and he made little effort to collect funds. Hence arose the embarrassment.

The misunderstanding connected with this period, is a matter of deep regret. To it may be traced a great part of the subsequent opposition to the management of the Society, and the alienation of many from it who previously were its friends.

The Committee think that a Financial Plan may be formed, embodying the chief elements of the Plan of 1849, and at the same time not essentially changing the standing rules of the Executive Committee. They would, therefore, recommend that the following suggestions should hereafter form a part of the standing rules of the Executive Committee, and would express a hope that they may be satisfactory to both parties:—

1. The regular meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held quarterly.
2. At each regular meeting, a full statement shall be made by the proper officers of the receipts and disbursements for the preceding quarter, and also a statement of outstanding liabilities.
3. No money shall be expended, and no debts incurred for any object not directly sanctioned and provided for by a vote of the Executive Committee.

4. All bills against the Society, before payment, shall be approved by a Committee on Bills.

5. The salaries of all officers of the Society, receiving compensation, shall be definitely fixed, and they shall render quarterly a strict and accurate account of their receipts, and of all expenses or disbursements incurred or made in behalf of the Society.

6. Every Agent who shall become personally responsible for any debts incurred by him in behalf of the Society, in accordance with the votes of the Executive Committee, shall be allowed to appropriate the funds collected by him to the payment of those debts, returning quarterly to the Executive Committee and to the Treasurer, proper vouchers approved by the Committee on Bills, certifying that such payment has been made. All the funds in his hands not thus appropriated, shall quarterly or sooner be paid to the Treasurer.

7. The Treasurer shall make out his own Annual Report, receiving quarterly Reports from all the collecting and disbursing Agents employed.

8. A Committee on Publications shall be appointed, of whom the Corresponding Secretary shall be ex-officio Chairman. It shall be the duty of this Committee to recommend such works as they may deem proper for publication, and to issue them when approved. No publication shall be issued, unless duly authorised by the Executive Committee. This rule shall not be construed to limit the usual editorial license allowed the Editor of the *Advocate of Peace*.

SAMUEL GREELE, *Chairman*,  
 ROB. WATERSTON,  
 JOHN TAPPAN,  
 D. S. KING,  
 J. W. CONVERSE,  
 FRANKLIN RAND,  
 JULIUS A. PALMER,  
 JOSEPH CUMMINGS, *Secretary*,  
 HUBBARD WINSLOW.

BOSTON, Nov. 19, 1851.

THE ACTUAL COURSE OF THE SOCIETY'S EXECUTIVE OFFICERS.—Not knowing whether the Committee of Reference would state what their course has actually been, the Executive Committee prepared an exact outline of that course to lay before the Society at its recent meeting, if desired. It was not called for; but, from the following extracts it will be seen, that *their course has been, in every essential particular, precisely the same with that recommended by the Committee of Reference*.

After stating that, at the time when the Society entrusted to them the management of its affairs, "our income from spontaneous sources was extremely small; the available portion of Mr. Ladd's legacy, from which we had, during the four preceding years, received an average of about \$1800 a year, was entirely exhausted; and the Society was also in debt some \$3000, with nothing in hand or in prospect to pay it," the Committee say—

"Under these circumstances, we adopted the following course:—

1. We resolved, first of all, to let no debts be contracted without adequate and reliable means of paying them.

2. No measure was to be undertaken, no expenses incurred, and no monies paid out, except in execution of the Committee's votes.

3. All bills against the Society, before being paid, were to be approved by a Committee on Bills.

4. For all liabilities incurred under the Committee's direction, the Corresponding Secretary, whom we appointed Financial Agent, was to be held personally responsible, and required, if enough was not contributed for the purpose by the friends of peace at large, to pay the balance from his own purse, and thus hold all the other members of the Committee, and the Society harmless. A hard task, but deemed in the emergency altogether indispensable; and its unquestionable necessity was the only consideration that could have induced us to lay so heavy a burden upon a single man, nor even then if he had not been willing in the exigency to assume its toils and its hazards.

5. For the Secretary's relief, and as a matter of clear justice to him, the Society's entire income was appropriated first to pay the expenses thus incurred; and, if this should prove for a season insufficient, the Secretary, as financial agent, was to be allowed ample time for raising the necessary funds, and also for completing any measures undertaken by him in pursuance of the Committee's votes.

6. The Secretary was authorized as Financial Agent, acting on behalf of the Treasurer, to receive and disburse the Society's monies, and required to lay before the Committee a quarterly report of all receipts, disbursements and out-standing liabilities, that we might know from quarter to quarter precisely how our pecuniary affairs stood. Such a report was not more frequent, because the accounts with our agents at a distance could not well be settled oftener.

7. With a view to this quarterly survey and adjustment of our pecuniary concerns, and the transaction of our most important business at such times, the Committee from the first adopted the plan of holding its *regular* meetings once a quarter, and others only as occasion might require.

Such have been our specific rules; but, for a full view of our course, we ought perhaps to add, that agents of the Society, if paid at all, have always received a stipulated compensation, and been instructed to render a quarterly account of their receipts and expenditures; that full and exact vouchers have been required of all who paid out monies for the Society; that the Financial Agent has first laid these vouchers before the Committee for their inspection, and then passed them into the hands of the Treasurer for preservation; that every annual report of the Treasurer, thus made up by him, has been regularly submitted to auditors, and attested by them as correct and properly vouched; and that all questions of importance, like those relative to publications, petitions to Congress, or the presentation of our cause in any special way before the public, have commonly been referred for careful investigation to sub-committees."

Such is the course pursued by the Executive Committee; and how did it work? The Executive Committee, after alluding to its special economy at our office, mention the following points:—

"*Its relief of the Society from debt* for current expenses, as appears from the comparative footings in the Treasurer's annual reports, as follows, viz. :—

In 1843, the balance against the Society, its debt, (see report,) - - - - -	\$2,515 35
In 1844, - - - - -	3,636 35
In 1845, - - - - -	4,928 82
In 1846, when \$5,200 was received from legacies, - - - - -	1,749 16

Under the system adopted by us, the balance stood thus:—

In 1847, less than six months after the system was introduced, debt only	\$17 12
In 1848, (see Report for each year,) balance in the Treasury, - - - - -	74 43
In 1849, - - - - -	16 96
In 1850, - - - - -	9 77;

while in 1851 there remained in the treasury \$162.44, after paying not only all claims that had matured, but all known out-standing liabilities; a thing never before done since the Society was located in Boston. These

results will appear the more significant, when we remember that, during these five years, we received from legacies only \$250 in all, while in the four preceding years there was received from these ~~an~~ average of \$1800 a year, and that the Society's operations meanwhile were not diminished but increased.

We will further allude only to the *increase of the Society's income from ordinary sources*, those which indicate the active interest in our cause for the time being. Here are the comparative results on this point:

In 1843, the income from such such sources was,	- - - - -	\$3,188 60
In 1844,	- - - - -	1,978 08
In 1845,	- - - - -	2,895 09
In 1846, (see Advocate of Peace for July in each year,) -	- - - - -	2,685 04
 An average each year of	- - - - -	\$2,419 20
In 1847, six months of the year under our system, -	- - - - -	\$3,337 34
In 1848,	- - - - -	4,011 91
In 1849,	- - - - -	3,697 58
In 1850, (deducting a legacy of \$250,) -	- - - - -	5,954 31
 An average for each year of	- - - - -	\$4,262 00, or,

an increase of full 75 per cent. over that of the four preceding years."

It may be proper to quote, also, the general view taken of the subject, not only by the Executive Committee after six year's experience, but by the Board of Directors before whom it was brought for special investigation. They say, "In carrying out this system, the Corresponding Secretary, as Financial Agent, has done, so far as we know or believe, only what we directed him to do. Its heavy burdens we imposed, and he assumed, only as a matter of necessity; and, so far from coveting such burdens, he has repeatedly sought release from them, and never expected to bear them permanently. We would gladly have relieved him; but every fresh investigation of the subject first by this Committee, and next by the Board of Directors, (his request for release having been brought before them both,) has ended in deepening the conviction, that, until our Society, like the Bible and the Missionary Society, shall have from spontaneous sources an adequate and reliable income, somebody must do for it what our Secretary has done. and what Mr. Ladd did before him, or its operations cannot be continued. We have all along shared our Secretary's earnest hopes, that such an income might be secured, or some person found to undertake with equal success the extra-official services he has performed as Financial Agent for nearly six years past, and thus let him devote himself, as he gladly would, if he could, entirely to the duties of his secretaryship, in which he would doubtless accomplish far more for our cause; but, until such income shall be secured, or such person found, we are constrained, as the result of long and ample experience, to believe that a system, essentially like the one adopted by us, and executed with similar fidelity, zeal and ability, will be found quite indispensable to the prosperity or our Society."

We beg leave to add a single "word of exhortation." Since this matter is now brought to a conclusion so satisfactory to the Society at large, we trust there will hereafter be no other strife among our friends than an amicable, generous rivalry to see who shall do most for the advancement of this important but much neglected cause. Here is just what it most needs, and ought forthwith to have. The Secretary has for seventeen years set an example of laborious, self-denying zeal in its behalf; and, if its friends will now come up en masse to its aid with similar energy and devotion, the Society will cease, as a matter of course, from all undue reliance on its Secretary, and be able with safety to grant his repeated and urgent requests for release from the excessive burdens hitherto imposed upon him.